Radicalizing Educational Leadership

Dimensions of Social Justice

Ira Bogotch, Floyd Beachum, Jackie Blount, Jeffrey Brooks, Fenwick English and Critical commentary by Jonathan Jansen
Radicalizing Educational Leadership: Dimensions of Social Justice
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND LEADERS IN CONTEXTS
Volume 2

Series Editor
Tony Townsend and Ira Bogotch
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Scope
The series, Educational Leadership and Leaders in Contexts, emphasizes how historical and contextual assumptions shape the meanings and values assigned to the term leadership. The series includes books along four distinct threads:

- Reconsidering the role of social justice within the contexts of educational leadership
- Promoting a community of leadership: Reaching out and involving stakeholders and the public
- Connecting the professional and personal dimensions of educational leadership
- Reconceptualizing educational leadership as a global profession

Perhaps to a greater extent than ever before, today’s educational leaders find themselves living in a world that is substantially different from what it was just a decade ago. The threads of social justice, community leadership, professional and personal dimensions, and globalism have added contextual dimensions to educational leaders that are often not reflected in their local job descriptions. This book series will focus on how these changing contexts affect the theory and practice of educational leaders.

Similarly, the professional lives of educational leaders has increasingly impinged upon their personal well-being, such that it now takes a certain type of individual to be able to put others before self for extended periods of their working life. This series will explore the dynamic relationship between the personal and the professional lives of school leaders.

With respect to communities, recent educational reforms have created a need for communities to know more about what is happening inside of classrooms and schools. While education is blamed for many of the ills identified in societies, school leaders and school communities are generally ignored or excluded from the processes related to social development. The challenge facing school leaders is to work with and build community support through the notion of community leadership. Thus, leadership itself involves working with teachers, students, parents and the wider community in order to improve schools.

As for the fourth thread, globalism, school leaders must now work with multiple languages, cultures, and perspectives reflecting the rapid shift of people from one part of the world to another. Educational leaders now need to be educated to understand global perspectives and react to a world where a single way of thinking and doing no longer applies.
Radicalizing Educational Leadership

*Dimensions of Social Justice*

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With critical commentary by Jonathan Jansen
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Series Preface ...........................................................................................................vii

Preface ......................................................................................................................ix

Meet the Authors ....................................................................................................xiii

INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................1

HISTORY AS A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING AND MOTIVATING ..........17
   Jackie Blount

TOWARD A TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORY
   OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ..........................................................................................39
   Floyd Beachum

FREEDOM AND JUSTICE .......................................................................................61
   Jeffrey Brooks

SOCIAL JUSTICE AS AN EDUCATIONAL CONSTRUCT .................................79
   Ira Bogotch

TOWARDS A THEORY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE/INJUSTICE .............................113
   Fenwick English

THE CHALLENGE OF THE ORDINARY ..............................................................147
   Jonathan Jansen

References ................................................................................................................157

Author Index ..........................................................................................................171

Subject Index .........................................................................................................173
SERIES PREFACE


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For example, in terms of social justice, governments ask education to provide opportunities for people to make their way in the world, yet it appears that the gap between those well-off and those not so well-off has never been wider, both in schools and in societies. How can the educational leader provide both the environment and the learning needed to ensure a more socially just world? More pointedly, how can educational leaders contribute to making a material difference in the everyday lives of people around the world?

In this volume, we strived to meet two important editorial objectives: (1) confronting and challenging traditional and generic notions of leadership in order to re-consider how cultures, communities, teachers, as well as students, influence and act as educational leaders; and, (2) engaging new authors and new voices alongside those who have shaped the field for the 21st century.

We hope you enjoy reading it.

Tony Townsend
Ira Bogotch
PREFACE

The authors of Radicalizing Educational Leadership: Dimensions of Social Justice have taken varied approaches to the study of social justice in relationship to educational leadership. Each stakes out a different and original theoretical position across social science disciplines and political, social, and ethical philosophies. What you will not find in this book, however, is a consensus on a single definition or meaning for the term social justice.

Not only have we not arrived at a single definition of social justice, we have deliberately introduced new ideas and theorists to educational audiences. Our approach extends beyond the small world of educational leadership and school improvement researchers. Thus, alongside the more familiar names of John Dewey, Ivan Illich, Paolo Freire, Jerome Bruner, Maxine Greene, Deborah Britzman, William Foster, and Michele Fine, etc. are the ideas of Cornel West, Michael Dyson, Michael Mann, Jared Diamond, John Rawls, Frederick Hayek, Iris Young, Kwame Appiah, and many others writing outside the fields of education. Their inclusion here puts an added responsibility on us as authors and on you as readers. For us, we have to be concise and precise as to why non-educators and their theories are relevant to education and educational leadership; for readers, you have to be critical of our choices and the ideas contained in this book.

Two points of emphasis: we all agreed from the beginning on the need for theory when discussing social justice; and, we have been respectful of our differing, if not contradictory, theoretical positions.

HOW THIS HAPPENED MAY BE OF INTEREST

From the beginning, the idea behind taking an extended period of time to develop our ideas on social justice across three academic conferences was deliberate. Some emerging lines of inquiry disappeared while others re-emerged, at times with just minor revisions, at other times with extensive shifts in thinking incorporating different literatures and arguments. Regardless, the authors remained committed to this process believing that what would emerge would be stronger theoretical approaches in connecting social justice to educational leadership.

We first came together in collaboration in preparation for the 2005 University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) conference under the symposium title Beyond Whining and Protesting: Towards a Theory of Social Justice. At the time, we had thought to organize our ideas around two concepts: diagnosis and treatment. We debated this electronically through e-mails and over the phone.

We don’t want to become part of the problem. The dilemma is that as we have tried to incorporate social justice in our educational leadership program, [but] it’s mostly protesting this and that across courses and encouraging our students to be “activists”—but I don’t see anywhere a solid, empirical, model
by which as “activists” they could use to get inside schools and change them to do anything else but reproduce the social structure...Right now, there is no solid theory for social justice. We have only critical racial theory or queer theory. In order to unlock schools and keep them unlocked from reproducing the social order we need to have a better understanding of how they locked it up in the first place. A good theory would do that. It would point out where to start to make a difference beyond what we are doing now for social justice.

That was my thinking. What do you all think about the two step process? Diagnosis: “What’s wrong?” and Treatment: “Here’s how to fix it?” Fenwick English

Floyd Beachum responded:

[W]e barely can define its [i.e., social justice] components and as I said before political correctness has people regurgitating the rhetoric instead of refining it into a reality. Thus, this effort becomes a substantial effort into unpacking and examining the internal components of social justice and pushing the theoretical boundaries beyond the existing philosophical silos.

Out of our convictions to understand social justice better came a second symposium for the 2006 American Educational Research Association convention (AERA) titled: Confronting the riddle of the social justice sphinx: Is a theory of social justice possible as a research base?

Between conferences, there were more e-mail conversations:

I worry about the same fate befalling social justice—will it be a buzzword for the in-crowd of researchers that will soon be replaced by another, sexier, term? Our work here gives me hope that we can build a more solid theoretical foundation from which future inquiry can build. To extend that metaphor, our “raw” building materials are planks borrowed from philosophical, historical, critical, and social theories. Now, please don’t misinterpret that to think I am suggesting that work done to date is useless or that we shouldn’t pursue certain lines of SJ inquiry. On the contrary, I think Ira [Bogotch] is dead-on in suggesting that the foundation can grow and grow and grow. I just think that our effort, which is in part to attempt to provide theoretical weight to important and loosely- coupled lines of inquiry, holds a lot of promise and is an important contribution. Okay...now I need another coffee! Jeffrey Brooks

Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals. Without persistent effort, time itself becomes an ally of the insurgent and primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social destruction. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action. Floyd Beachum

These thoughts are changing as we speak (in terms of theoretical insight and philosophical depth). Floyd Beachum
Our words took on a decidedly radical and critical stance of our own field of educational leadership. We came together around the need for changes in research questions and methods, graduate leadership preparation, and school-wide practices. At the same time, we did not limit ourselves to the worthy pursuits of ethical schools, democratic school leadership practices or equitable opportunities of teachers and students. Our theories looked past the artificial walls of schooling and entered into the daily lives of people regardless of where they lived.

[M]y take is that educational researchers are too often stuck in a conceptual rut because rather than building on solid work already completed with increasingly sophisticated and theoretically-dense analyses, we have a self-defeating tendency to rename phenomena and act as though we have discovered something new, when in fact, what people mainly do is refine and test theories and phenomenon. Could it be in part due to the entrepreneurial bent that so much educational leadership literature/research exhibits? I don’t know, but anyway, that’s where I am today...and that’s the paper I am planning to work toward. Jeffrey Brooks

Embedded in our conversations were continuing concerns about how to organize our presentations. How would the original metaphor of diagnosis-treatment evolve? How should we connect philosophy with contemporary ideas? In a personal communication with a colleague outside the narrow field of educational leadership, we read the following:

Is it possible to connect the writing on the philosophers to the “problems” [of social justice]? Coming at this from a Freirean perspective (I don’t know that he even uses the term social justice), I find this historical journey rather puzzling, quite unconnected to what I do. So please connect it. Give me a reason for why I need to be interested in taking the journey into what these dead white men had to say about social justice. (I find ‘justice’ to be a very different thing!!). Dilys Schoorman

Such criticism is not at all surprising. In fact, how theory – any theory – connects to the lives of school administrators and teachers in a meaningful way must be addressed. And it is. For Jackie Blount, her cogent response calls for the necessities of historical understanding when pursuing social justice work. Her histories and biographies speak to the lived experiences inside of school practice. For Jeffrey Brooks, there is a need for educators, particularly researchers, to step back from immediate problems in order to re-discover our fundamental mission as both educators and educated citizens. For Floyd Beachum, the dominant discourses reveal double-edged swords of justice and injustice which require a transformation constructed from the margins of society. For Ira Bogotch, the failings of both social theories and educational theories require that education itself be re-invented and then inserted as valid theories into social justice. For Fenwick English who argues that while history may be accidental, neither injustices nor our educational leadership responses to them can be anything but deliberate. Each of the five
authors finds a way to build a social justice theory from intimate educative experiences that connect explicitly to larger social forces.

But, alas, even that was not enough to bring this book to you. The Series co-editor, Tony Townsend read our completed first draft. His response:

Each of the 5 authors has written essays that look at social justice from his/her own [theoretical and North American] viewpoints. I have read the chapters they have written and believe that a responsive chapter written by someone from a completely different context would make the book more whole – a chapter that puts what has been said into an international context.

The name Jonathan Jansen came immediately to mind. Fortunately, he accepted this challenge. Thus, a book which was considered finished and whole was put onto the shelf awaiting critique.

Jansen’s critique comes after the five essays. It complements the text. He pushes the argument to make the abstract terms of justice, social justice, and injustice even more concrete – not just with adverbs, direct objects, and prepositions, but with the realities of educators inside of educational institutions and outwards into all societies. He extends the book’s critiques of social theory and social science and personalizes the consequences for all of us as educators and citizens. In short, he completes the book by speaking of leadership and leadership theory as concrete and action-oriented, highlighting that the enemies of social justice have us all pointing fingers at ourselves and at others in ways that existing theories cannot explain. Why are we so complicit and compliant?

Collectively, we conclude not with a consensus on a concise definition of social, but with acknowledging that there are no utopias on planet earth and that all educational struggles for social justice – including this book – remain unfinished and incomplete. We readily acknowledge our limitations and the many holes in our arguments. We certainly could not speak on behalf of the entire international community. But that is also our promise to you; for if the essays here do not capture your unique situation, then you, too, are obligated to bring forth your subjective theories of justice. As educators, we hold positions of relative status and privilege while also having a minority voice in social theory debates. By adding your voices as educational leaders, we may all become stronger.
MEET THE AUTHORS

[in alphabetical order]

**Floyd Beachum** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Administrative Leadership at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*. His research has been published in the *Journal of Negro Education, Educational Forum, Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, and *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration*. Floyd has co-authored an edited book titled *Urban Education for the 21st Century.*

This book is dedicated first to my wife Katerri Stacks-Beachum for her continued love and support. It is also dedicated to my entire family who keeps me focused and grounded. Lastly, this book is dedicated to teachers and scholars everywhere who struggle for a social justice discovery, definition, and destiny.

**Jackie Blount** is currently a Professor of Historical, Comparative, and Philosophical Studies in Education and also Associate Dean of the College of Human Sciences at Iowa State University. Her work has been published in the *Harvard Educational Review, Review of Educational Research*, and *Educational Administration Quarterly*. She also has written *Destined to Rule the Schools* (1998) and *Fit to Teach: Same-Sex Desire, Gender, and School Work in the Twentieth Century* (2005). Currently, she is writing a biography of Ella Flagg Young.

I have drawn intellectual support from more persons, both known and unknown, than I could ever adequately acknowledge. The persons whose ideas have most significantly affected my scholarship have been Ella Flagg Young, John D’Emilio, Kate Rousmaniere, David Tyack, Fen English, Cheryl Achterberg, and Jared Diamond. Personally, BeJae Fleming has profoundly influenced all of my thinking. Overall, I have endeavored to find links between my scholarship and my own social justice work, making them one and the same wherever possible.

**Ira Bogotch** is currently a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Florida Atlantic University. He has served as the School Leadership Program leader at both FAU and at the University of New Orleans. His interest in social justice dates back to the Vietnam War era and the many protests needed to end that war. Ira is the Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Leadership in Education* and currently serves on the editorial boards of *Urban Education, The Professional Educator*, and *Educational Administration Quarterly*.

My first publication on the topic of social justice appeared in the *Journal of School Leadership* in 2002. I have been rethinking that article ever since. Along the way, I was encouraged to keep *beginning again* by many colleagues, most notably Luis Miron, Spencer Maxcy, Scott Bauer, Fenwick...
English, Fran Kochan, Carolyn Shields, Robert Kottkamp, and Gail Furman. My FAU colleagues, Pat Maslin-Ostrowski, John Pisapia, Jennifer Sughrue, Dilys Schoorman, Daniel Reyes-Guerra, Michele Acker-Hocevar, and Tony Townsend have all criticized my works. Thank you. Yet, in all of my years writing, I wonder if I will ever be able to communicate so that Rochelle, Sara, and Ari would consider reading. That’s my motivation.

Jeffrey Brooks is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology at Auburn University. His research focuses on socio-cultural and ethical aspects of educational leadership practice and preparation, with specific emphases on teacher leadership, school reform, and issues of race and gender. These lines of inquiry include both domestic research conducted in the United States, and more recently international studies in the Philippines. He is author of the book, *The Dark Side of School Reform: Teaching in the Space between Reality and Utopia* (2006, Rowman & Littlefield Education).

I owe a debt of gratitude to my collaborators in this book for initiating this endeavor, inspiring me, and urging me to push my thinking about social justice. We have not arrived at the goal equitable schooling, but as the Buddha pointed out: the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. I am proud to have taken a step with each of you. I also thank Catherine Marshall, Catherine Lugg, Linda Tillman, Gail Furman, Ernestine Enomoto, Margaret Grogan, Jerry Starratt, Joan Shapiro, Jackie Stefkovich, John Merrill, and Michael Dantley and many other authors I cited in this work for guidance through their scholarship. While many others undoubtedly deserve my gratitude, I acknowledge the particular contributions of my friends and colleagues Jeffrey Ayala Milligan and Anthony H. Normore for their constant support and honest critique. Most importantly, I thank my wife Melanie and daughters Holland, Bronwyn, and Clodagh for their love and support during the development of this book; the four of you are my personal and professional foundation, and I love you dearly.

Fenwick English is currently the R. Wendell Eaves Senior Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Formerly he served as a program coordinator, department chair, dean, and vice-chancellor of academic affairs, the latter two positions in the Purdue University system at Fort Wayne, Indiana. As a K-12 practitioner, he has been a superintendent of schools in New York, an assistant superintendent of schools in Florida, and a middle school principal in California. He also had a stint as an associate executive director of AASA and served as principal (partner) in Peat, Marwick, Main & Co. (now KPMG Peat Marwick) where he was national practice director for elementary and secondary education, North America. Dr. English created the curriculum management audit process which has been in use since 1979. He is the author or co-author of over twenty books in education, many of which are used as texts in college courses today.
Jonathan Jansen is currently Rector of University of the Free State, South Africa. He recently was a Fulbright Scholar at Stanford University. Prior to that he was Dean of Education at the University of Pretoria. In 2007, Dr. Jansen delivered a keynote address at the University Council of Educational Administration in Alexandria, Virginia. Other keynotes include the International Conference on School Effectiveness and School Improvement and the Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision, Curriculum, and Development. A 2006 article, Leading Against the Grain: The Politics and Emotions of Leading for Social Justice in South Africa, explored the work of school principals who promote social justice against the grain of public expectations. Employing a biographical lens, Dr. Jansen’s work focuses on how race, gender, history, and institutional culture intersect, often in the volatile context of South Africa. He explains his own leadership as a negotiated transition of Black leadership inside of the dominant White institutions by means of balancing tensions of affirmation and inclusion, retention and restitution, caring and correction, accommodation and assertion, and racial reconciliation and social justice.
INTRODUCTION

Educators have much to learn from social science debates on social justice. Conversely, social scientists engaged in social justice research have much to learn from education. In this Introduction, we have approached social justice from both perspectives.

PART ONE: WHAT CAN SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS LEARN FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES?

Jeffrey Brooks

I contend that a more deliberate and meaningful connection to the social sciences could ultimately help provide a foundation for radical innovation in both the research and practice of educational leadership—it could also be the intellectual scaffold on which a theory of social justice is ultimately built. As you read further, I will endeavor to provide support for these assertions and discuss how formal and informal educational leadership can be a force for the creation and sustenance of more equitable and just schools. Before I provide rationales and evidence for these contentions, it is important to note at the onset of this phase of the investigation that I am not calling for any particular “focus” or narrowing of research on leadership and justice. On the contrary, this is a call for an explosion of thoughtful and interconnected activity; I am in favor of a proliferation of approaches to the way scholars and leaders-in-the-field go about their work. I am suggesting that by learning from, and building on, already rich veins of scholarship, educational leaders can understand and enact justice in a more deliberate and reasoned manner. Cohen (1986) summarized this sentiment when he noted that:

Whatever its initial (and perhaps, disciplinary) foundation, an understanding of justice and injustice will require attention to concerns that are psychological, economic, sociological, and philosophical. Failure to recognize this may lead those working in this area to substitute unacknowledged and therefore unexamined, assumptions based on their ignorance of work in related disciplines (p. 3).

One of my great hopes is that educational leaders are destined to become social rights leaders in a new era of equity and equality (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003); my great fear is that these same leaders are doomed to repeat individual and collective behaviors that contribute to school systems that have at times been rightly characterized as “evil”—hegemonic, discriminatory, unjust, and unfair. In the subsequent section, I briefly and broadly review specific lines of justice-related inquiry in philosophy, economics, political studies, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and public policy. Building on this foundation, I then discuss how these concepts have been (and have not been) extended into research on educational leadership before finally discussing the implications of these connections, and disconnections, for scholarship and practice.

Ira Bogotch et al. (eds.), Radicalizing Educational Leadership: Dimensions of Social Justice, 1–15. © 2008 Sense Publishers. All rights reserved.
INTRODUCTION

JUSTICE: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

It is important first, however, to point out certain assumptions that undergird this multidisciplinary review of research on justice. First, justice (like freedom, see Brooks pp. 61ff in this volume) is both individual and organizational. It is not by accident that I refer to justice, rather than social justice throughout this essay. This exigency was prompted by the recognition that justice has both personal and collective dimensions, and that it can be enacted and experienced as one person and as a collective or sub-collective. Accordingly, while educational leaders can (and should) be conceived as advocates for social justice, especially those with positional power and formal influence, it is also appropriate to consider leaders as advocates for individual justice. Second, justice has both conceptual and empirical qualities. While research on justice often necessarily begins with abstract conceptualizations, it can also be manifest as tangible and observable activities and behaviors. Thus, it follows that justice can be studied through a variety of methodological approaches. Depending on the epistemological and/or methodological orientation of a study, justice may be a measurable or observed event, a purely theoretical construct, or more likely a combination of the two.

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES OF JUSTICE

Philosophers have long been interested in the concept of justice. While it is certainly possible to trace justice studies to Plato’s Republic and throughout many Eastern traditions, Western philosophers have tended to concentrate on a few central themes. Among these is the issue of whether justice is properly conceived as retributive and/or distributive. Retributive justice holds that "...the guilty are to be punished, not in order to deter others from committing similar offenses, nor to satisfy the desire for revenge or otherwise contribute to social utility, but simply because wrongdoing as such ought to be punished, regardless of the consequences of doing so" (Buchanan & Mathieu, 1986, p. 13). Distributive justices, on the other hand, are “those principles that are designed to regulate social and economic inequalities” (Buchanan & Mathieu, 1986, p. 13). Recently, philosophers have argued that this distinction is not salient due to the fact that retributive justice is more correctly one of many criminal justice theories.

Philosophers also differentiate between justice as a comparative and non-comparative phenomenon. That is, should justice be meted out on the principle of equity (comparative) or equality (noncomparative)? This fundamental question has inspired hot debate among philosophers for thousands of years and is wrapped up in several conflagrated issues. The first of these issues is consideration of the material principles of justice, or put differently, we must decide which concepts and characteristics should determine the distribution of justice. For example, Rescher (1972) suggests that “there are seven common material principles of distributive justice recognized today: equality, need, ability, effort, productivity, public utility, and supply and demand” (Buchanan & Mathieu, 1986, p. 20). In a sense, the relative
weight and distribution of these characteristics, and others such as institutionalized
discrimination and hegemony, can be said to indicate a kind of equation of justice:

\[
\text{Equality} + \text{Justice} = \text{Equity}
\]

If this is the case, it follows that a consideration of just procedures and just
outcomes must necessarily accompany any such formula.

While there is much debate among philosophers as to which concepts are
relevant to a discussion of justice, Rawls (1971, 1999) is frequently cited as a
modern point of departure. His theory of justice rests on three principles:

- The principle of greatest equal liberty: Each person is to have an equal right to
  the most extensive system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar
  system of liberty for all.
- The principle of equality of fair opportunity: Offices and positions are to be
  open to all under conditions of equality of fair opportunity—persons with
  similar abilities and skills are to have equal access to offices and positions.
- The difference principle: Social and economic institutions are to be arranged so
  as to benefit maximally the worst off (Buchanan & Mathieu, 1986, p. 27).

Certainly, these principles are only a place to begin the conversation of how to
operationalize justice, and philosophers have debated the utility of Rawls’ position,
as do my co-authors in this book, but these principles lay an excellent foundation
for the purpose of this review.

ECONOMIC STUDIES OF JUSTICE

Economic studies of justice can be thought of emanating from four distinct strains
of thought. The first is Aristotelian, and entails

“an effort to differentiate three kinds of social obligations, those relating to
(a) distributive justice, which has to do with the divisions of honors, money,
or other goods among participants in a common enterprise; (b) rectificatory
justice, which takes account of injuries done one private individual to
another; and (c) exchange, or commutative, justice, which provides norms for
the regulation of voluntary transactions between private individuals”

A second strain is rooted in Adam Smith’s notion of the disembedded place
of economics as a part of the larger social system. That is, particular institutions, such
as school systems, develop their own idiosyncratic norms of interaction and
exchange. This position particularly prompts an analysis of microeconomic activity
in situ at the school or classroom level, rather relying on larger (say, federal but
also possibly even state and district level) indicators as a measure of just
distribution. This strain of inquiry begs the questions: Which children have what?
Why do they have it? And how have educational leaders influenced, by omission
or commission, this distribution? Strain three of economic justice is rooted in the
thinking of Karl Marx. Marx’s labor theory of value suggests abolition of personal
property and a redistribution of goods and services based on an overriding socialist
principle that calls for value to be determined by the relative amount of labor required for production. Put differently, Marx places a premium on production, with supply and demand and market forces taking a back seat. To be sure, I am painting with broad strokes here. There exist myriad economic distinctions that extend far beyond these simplistic explanations. For the purpose of this review, the key point I wish to make is that there are many ways to conceive of the distribution of goods and services in a just manner; there is no one way to fairly distribute the products of an economic system. Educational leaders would do well to continually interrogate the reasons and manners in which they influence the distribution of goods, services, and resources.

POLITICAL STUDIES OF JUSTICE

Political studies of justice center, broadly, on the relationship of an individual, sub-group, and/or a political plenum to other individuals, political sub-groups, and/or political plenums. Social contract theorists such as Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau explored the nature of this relationship. Grotius, writing in the 19th century, argued that whether or not an individual or group retains or abdicates sovereign authority over their actions is the essential aspect of political life and the quality that makes political systems possible (Schacht, 1970). The social contract, as conceived by both Hobbes and Locke, is entered into when an individual refrains from single-minded pursuit of their own good if the means of achieving their goals impinged on another member of society’s pursuit of their own good. The social contract, then, allows competing (yet possibly tempered) visions of the good life to co-exist, provided that individuals respect others by agreeing to absolve some rights and ends for the good of society. Hobbes deemed this a useful and necessary arrangement: “society is constructed for the sake of the individual, and it seeks only to preserve singular interests and accommodate singular needs” (Wiser, 1983, p. 194). Famously, Hobbes characterized natural life, that is, life before or without the social contract as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Wiser, 1983, p. 199 quoting Hobbes’ Leviathan). Locke’s political theory differs to some degree, as he placed greater emphasis on punitive action against adjudged violators of codified doctrine, yet retains the central focus of resigning certain freedoms to others as a foundation of society. Both Hobbes and Locke asserted that individuals stand to gain a great deal more than they lose in this arrangement in that co-existence allows for exchange of goods and services unequalled by a solitary existence (Schmitt, 2003, p. 17). Others, such as Rousseau, believed that such an arrangement exacted too great a toll on the individual, instead suggesting that such a contract is debilitating. To Rousseau, the quality of life in modern civilized societies compared unfavorably to that of a solitary (and somewhat fictive) “natural man,” whose life was characterized by authentic pride and self-love (Schmitt, 2003, pp. 16-18). Although his notion of natural man was abstract and archetypal, he used the construction as a romantic alternative to the contemporary “civilized” man. Thus equipped with a theoretical counterpoint, Rousseau used natural man as a means to critique the extant relationship of individual to society. Rousseau believed that “alienation is
rampant because people, [who] instead of trying to be themselves, succumb to the
demands of society and arrange their lives to meet fashion’s demands” (Schmitt,
2003, p. 19). Therefore, as people enter into a social contract that allows them to
cohabitate, personal values give way to normative processes and the discrete
individual melts into an aggregate political plenum. In such an arrangement, justice
becomes a protean negotiated concept, realized as a function of norms and mores.
Rousseau believed that people give up too much of themselves to become citizens.
Individuals, as natural beings, are unrecognizable within the social contract and
are instead infected with extrinsic and intrinsic conformity and sanction, whose
inescapable symptom is alienation. Educational leaders would do well to (re)examine
the ways they shape the social contract in their schools.

Contemporary political studies also center on concepts such as differentiations
between “old” and “new” forms of liberalism and conservatism (Di Quattro, 1986),
relative vs. normative justice, the role of market values and institutions as a vehicle
for the administration of natural justice, and the notion that as closed and/or open
political systems, justice is variously effected by extra-institutional forces, actors,
and agents.

SOCIological STUDIES OF JUSTICE

To sociologists, “justice is more often an implicit theme rather than an explicit
object of study in sociology” (Rytina, 1986, p. 117). To some extent this is due to the
focus of sociology as a hermeneutic discipline, since the “concept is often relative
to a particular point of view of a participant in a particular set of social arrange-
ments” (Rytina, 1986, p. 117). As such, while there is much research that could be
characterized as related to justice, there is little work directly focused on the issue
as such, and even fewer sociologists hazard a definition of the phenomenon. Instead,
the issue is often explained in terms of social arrangements. As Rytina (1986) explains:

“The question of justification of inequality is one of distributive justice or fair
rules or procedures or processes for the allocation of advantage and
 disadvantage. Ideally, the issue is not whether a particular arrangement is
fair, but whether or to what degree it is accepted as fair by those who live
under it” (p. 117).

Sociologists have evoked conflict theory and various forms of critical theory to
explain justice-related issues. Conflict theory

“uses the same general systems analysis as does functionalism but focuses on
conflict, change, and inequality, which it views as a consequence of unequal
resource distribution within society. Conflict theorists believe that conflict,
rather than equilibrium, is natural and inherent to social systems and that it in
fact contributes to the healthy adaptations of social systems” (DeMarrias &
LeCompte, 1999).
INTRODUCTION

On the other hand, critical theories have been defined in different ways by various theorists. However, DeMarrias and LeCompte (1997) offer a broad overview. They explain that critical theory

“asserts that existing social structures derive from historically generated patterns of domination and subordination. Many critical theorists state that patterns of oppression derive from inequities in the distribution of economic resources; others focus on the unequal distribution of knowledge and skill in society. These theorists are concerned with the power of language and the control of information, and so they often give particular attention to curriculum. Still others emphasize asymmetries such as race, gender, religion, age, gender preference, and region. Critical theorists make two different critiques of the existing social order. The first views the hegemony of the existing order as inescapably rigid and inequitarian, dooming most of the human race to slavery or rule by autocrats. The second and less pessimistic critique emphasizes human “agency” or self-determination in the face of institutional rigidity. The latter provides a basis for social transformation insofar as it uses social critique as a way to escape the control of the dominant classes” (p. 34).

These theories offer powerful and well-articulated perspectives that can help researchers and educational leaders alike understand socially constructed justice-related phenomena such as inequity, bias, discrimination, and stereotyping.

PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF JUSTICE

Like sociologists, psychologists have refrained from advancing germinal definitions of justice. Psychologists have also engaged in a running debate about how to measure justice (Furby, 1986). However, a great deal of work has developed around a distinct cluster of phenomena, which are commonly grouped together as a domain of inquiry. This cluster includes (at least) research on equity, equality, procedural justice, distributive justice, and the sense of injustice (Furby, 1986). Psychologists have sought to refine their understanding of each of these phenomena and more recently have begun to explore the relationship between these psychological concepts. Historically speaking, research on justice grew out of social exchange theory, which “emphasizes the role of distributional or exchange considerations in shaping the dynamics of interpersonal interactions (Furby, 1986, p. 154). However, this perspective has grown in obtuse directions over the past sixty years, which has led to advances in psychological thinking about a panoply of topics, including cognitive developmental stage theories of justice, multiple standards theory, and research on fulfillment of expectations, entitlement, and interpretations of justice.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES OF JUSTICE

While rarely dealing with justice as a formal subject of inquiry, anthropologists still make some interesting assertions about the phenomenon. For example, Nader and Sursock (1986) claim that
INTRODUCTION

 justice beliefs and behaviors and the justice motive are universal phenomena
 the meaning of justice will vary with different social and cultural settings
 different forms of justice may exist within one sociocultural setting and often in
 societies with ranked or stratified social structures.

 The authors continue by asserting that these three points need empirical study,
 but offer evidence in support of their claims. The contention that justice beliefs and
 behaviors are universal phenomena stems first from psychological studies of
 child development data (Nader & Sursock, 1986, p. 206) and was generalized even
 further by Lerner and Whitehead (1980) who argued that “considerations of justice
 shape the way people interact with one another in every encounter, especially where
 there is a common endeavor or resources to be allocated” (p. 242). Conceived in
 this way, the idea of justice “encompasses what people’s expectations are in relation
 to the mechanisms of justice, what they feel they deserve, and the decision-making
 processes that are used in arriving at outcomes” (Nader & Sursock, 1986, p. 206). These
 concepts urge empirical studies to consider justice as an in situ construct that
 is both individually and institutionally perceived and enacted in conceptual and
 empirical domains.

 Certain anthropological methods and epistemological orientations may yet yield
 important findings in the study of educational leadership for justice. For example,
anthropologists “have often presented polar types whose usefulness lies not so
 much in their accuracy as in their illumination of salient ideological values or
 social features” (Nader & Sursock, 1986, p. 208). This technique has already
 yielded important and useful findings about justice among indigenous populations
 (e.g. Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Gibbs, 1987) where justice dichotomies such as
 individualistic/holistic, paternal/matriarchal, compensatory/therapeutic, etc. have
 paved a path for subsequent inquiry. This technique has already led to insightful
 research that investigated trenchant ideological values in schools, school districts,
 and communities (e.g. Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007; Wolcott, 1999) but may
 ultimately yield important advances in understanding justice as a leadership-
specific phenomenon.

 Anthropological explanations of justice-related phenomena have also produced
 interesting findings that need further exploration and clarification. Among these are
 the concepts of justice as a social exchange (reciprocity), the way individuals and
 cultures justify events (luck, fate, desert, etc.), the way social (in)justice is manifest
 as mundane behavior and overlooked cultural norms, and the social structures
 erected around concepts such as multiculturalism and pluralism.

 PUBLIC POLICY STUDIES OF JUSTICE

 Soltan (1986) argues a point familiar to educational researchers, but from the
 perspective of public policy:

 “.Public policy analysis, together with management theory and legal theory,
 are areas in which intellectual work in the social sciences most directly
 impinges on practical questions. In all three of these areas the unity of theory
 and practice is not a slogan of a revolutionary party but the need of everyday
INTRODUCTION

(and quite unrevolutionary) experience. This determines the form that interest in justice takes in the policy sciences” (p. 235).

Justice is both an abstract “big” idea and also a concrete “little” idea in that it permeates the norms of practice in professional fields. This basic assertion should not be taken as an inseparable rift between theory and practice, but rather as a tension to be negotiated.

Public policy researchers’ work in justice has largely taken place at the systems level, and concerns objectivity of standards, normative pluralism, and investigations of the complexity of said pluralism. Accordingly, a genuine concern of public policy researchers has been just development and application of policies that meaningfully address and reconcile systemic inequities. Corollary to this primary concern is interest in measurement and objectivity in analysis of justice. Traditionally, objectivity and direct measurement were the norm in this area of research, but more recently the field has accepted that “indirect” and “imprecise” measures may offer the most important and useful insights into justice-related phenomena such as willingness to pay and sacrifice (Soltan, 1986).

Soltan (1986) characterizes public policy research on justice as existing on a continuum between utilitarianism on the one hand and normative pluralism on the other. In a sense, this frames the debate on justice as a struggle between whether or not characteristics such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. should weigh into public policy debates.

HOW DEEP AND HOW WIDE? EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Over the past two decades, justice has become an area of interest among educational leadership practitioners and researchers (See Marshall and Oliva, 2006 for an outstanding collection of this literature). Scholars have developed vibrant conceptual lines of inquiry and have engaged in an ongoing conversation on, particularly, social justice. This work is promising, and has lead to insightful commentary and critiques of:

– The knowledge base(s) that undergirds our understanding of educational leadership. In what ways is the “base” biased? What questions have been historically obscured, ignored, and suppressed?

– The methodologies used to understand justice as phenomena in educational leadership. The interrogation of both qualitative and quantitative methods as viable tools for addressing systemic inequity. Should new techniques be developed (e.g. equity audits)?

– The relationship of the researcher to the researched. Should researchers be “public intellectuals” (Dantley & Tillman, 2006) or “bridge people” who assume an activist and/or advocate stance toward issues of justice? While each of these questions is fodder for academic debate, a more substantive question looms; what comes next?

My contention is that the field might consider taking a step backward in order to take several forward. That is, educational leadership researchers might re-examine
freedom and justice, both in terms of social and individual dynamics and as
disciplinary-specific, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary phenomenon. By
adopting this approach, we can connect and extend long-established lines of
conceptual and empirical inquiry and thereby gain insights that may otherwise be
overlooked or assumed. This holds great promise for generating, refining, and
testing theories of social justice in educational leadership and will help strengthen
already vibrant lines of inquiry. That is, rather than citing a single, or a few, works
out of their disciplinary context it might be more fruitful to situate educational
leadership for social justice research in their respective traditions. This could be
carried out by extending extant lines of inquiry I have discussed in this
Introduction into educational leadership research, and then incorporating lessons
gleaned from this work into innovative practice. For example, why not more
clearly establish lines of educational leadership and justice research into the
Philosophy of Social Justice, Economics of Social Justice, Political Studies of
Social Justice, Sociology of Social Justice, Anthropology of Social Justice, and the
Public Policy of Social Justice as focused and discrete areas of inquiry? This
inquiry might begin with the following questions:
– How have the concepts of justice and injustice emerged in the theoretical and
  practical history of the discipline?
– What are the major controversies that have emerged from this history and that
  characterize current discussions of justice in the discipline?
– What are the crucial issues one might propose as an agenda for work in the
  discipline in the immediate future?
– What specific aspects of this agenda would require work conducted primarily
  from the perspective of other disciplines in the social sciences, and how much
  would such work contribute to advancing the understanding of issues on that
  agenda? (Cohen, 1986)

Once this new orientation toward the knowledge base of justice and educational
leadership is laid, we might then seek to explore some of the natural connections
between traditions before ultimately investigating justice in educational leadership
through a free association of ideas as the worlds of practice and research co-
construct a “new” language they can use to discuss educational leadership. Such an
endeavor may demand reconceptualization of both the processes and products of
collaborative research and the communication of findings, but it will demand a
breaking-down of methodological and epistemological biases and a more
meaningful level and type of engagement between primary and applied knowledge
bases.

The implications of the interdisciplinary orientation I am proposing are as much
of interest to practitioners as it is researchers. Faculty teaching in educational
leadership preparation programs might, for example, create an interdisciplinary
strain of justice research or organize program curricula, course content, and student
experiences on this framework. P-12 educational leaders might consider that
freedom and justice, as I have described them here, entail both: (a) a sensitivity
toward and understanding of the ways these concepts are theoretically and empirically
manifest in educational settings, and, more importantly; (b) an understanding of
how to influence change in each of these domains. It is simply not sufficient to
identify achievement gaps using standardized testing data, although that is certainly a useful point of departure. Instead, I would argue that practitioners should be attuned to the various disciplinary manifestations and conceptualizations of justice and be trained in techniques that allow them to positively influence these phenomena, such as satyagraha (non-violent resistance) and critical consciousness. Only then will we begin not only to rethink the way theories of justice and practice inform educational leadership, but also to reconsider how leaders can influence systems and practices to offer a new vision of freedom and justice for their students.

PART TWO: WHAT CAN SOCIAL SCIENCE LEARN FROM THE STUDY OF EDUCATION?

*Ira Bogotch*

Jeffrey Brooks argued that educational researchers might profit from taking a step backwards in order to move forward on the topic of social justice. But what if we reversed the question? What if social theorists grounded in the social sciences, humanities and philosophy paid more attention to educational theories and practice? The evidence I will present here seems to indicate that social theorists and philosophers have tended to ignore educational theory and practices or have viewed education instrumentally as a byproduct of the global society, or, at best, as developmental processes rooted in the cognitive sciences or developmental psychology (see for example Rawls, 1999, p. 430).

For many intellectuals, education is delimited to institutionalized structures of schooling, a defined place in time for children, primarily, and thus, disconnected from the dominant social forces that propel and constrain the peoples and nations of the world. In spite of evidence that schooling correlates not only with economic well being, but also with the quality of one’s life, there are those who simply do not see education having a central role in the accumulation of wealth or the exercise of power across continents, else why would governments and their leaders not provide quality educational opportunities to all citizens?

Why has education been ignored or devalued as a generative social theory? Instead, education is equated with grade levels and subject areas measured by standardized tests which translate into accountability systems that compare performances of children and adults across cultures and continents. Issues of achievement, equity and excellence have been subsumed under the assumptions of centralized authorities, politically and economically. Educational artifacts and coherent policies align measures of student achievement with testing, textbooks, promotions, and graduation around the world. It is nothing short of the globalization of state mandated education. Thus, there is no necessity to hear from educators on professional issues of pedagogy, research or leadership. The field has been folded into already pre-conceived ideas regarding the foreseeable future.

Educators themselves have not given political or business leaders viable alternatives that might disrupt the governance or practice of schooling. Educators
themselves tend to underestimate the power of education as theory and social practice to transform individuals, communities and whole societies. If this is so, then we are confronted by a reciprocal problem: that is, social theorists eschew the constructive and necessary role of educational institutions and processes, especially pedagogy and leadership, in building a just community; while, educators eschew the influences of macro and micro social theories. If we are to succeed in clarifying social justice issues and problems of contemporary educational leadership, it will happen only when educators, at all levels, fully embrace the intellectual, political, social, and ethical challenges they face everyday. The majority of educators today look to centralized authorities, local, state, and national agencies, to tell them “what matters” in our schools, not vice versa. Therefore, before we can demand respect from social theorists regarding the theories of education, we ourselves need to be self-educated with respect to history, cultural studies, and philosophy. On this point, Brooks is correct. Still, I want to look at the other side of this same coin. Our vocation is about educating educational leaders.

The emergence of social justice as an educational leadership theme for organizing school practices and educational research holds out new hopes for educators. But this contemporary movement is still young, and the ideas too fragmented to cause any ripple in global mindsets or markets. Nevertheless, social theories themselves have not been able to explain successfully how global phenomena emerge or develop (see Hayek, 1976). Global phenomena are readily evident from the fall of communism, the rise of nationalism, the commodification of music, art, and blue jeans to technological advances in virtual and real time communications, etc. Despite the lack of an explanatory social or political or economic theory, education has not been elevated to a place at the social justice policy table. This absence of educators and educational theory should not be troubling just to educators. It should be troubling to social theorists, too, who have presupposed the possibilities for social justice without understanding pedagogical and leadership theories [of liberation] or acknowledging the power of the most dominant social institution throughout the world – i.e., educational institutions – for either social justice or social ills. It is not naive to be asking the question: How can social justice become a reality without acknowledging the power of teaching, learning, and leading around the world?

While it is true that aspects of education can be found inside of a number of social justice theories (Bojer, 2000), I will demonstrate first, in this introduction, that educations’ inclusion has been inadequate, and then expand upon these foundational ideas later in the text (see Bogotch, pp. 79ff). My thesis is that education belongs inside every social justice debate, not as a byproduct, but rather as a necessary contributor to nation building and progress. Social justice requires educational constructs in order for social justice to become not only a valid theory, but also a lived reality. The very necessity for a social justice theory is education. If that is the case, then as educators, we are justified, based on logic and actual world events, in making our voices heard with respect to new leadership and new theories for social justice.
EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE: A DEFENSE OF EDUCATION

Why is it that most theoretical accounts of social justice artificially begin with fully developed human beings, adults, ready to engage in every aspect of adult life with their worldly values, cultural, national, and religious, already in place and accounted for? This pre-supposition of individuals in adulthood as the embodiment of evolved reason is without empirically grounded educational facts. How strange since childhood and the various activities of teaching and learning have been present inside every society throughout history. Erickson (1963) remarked: “One may scan work after work on history, society, and morality and find little reference to the fact that all people start as children...” (p. 17). Even Rawls (1999) admits that beginning with rational adults is not how the actual processes of justice happen (p. 176).

Philosophers and social theorists take their views of education second hand, admittedly ignoring the complexities and details of education (Rawls, p. 411). Rawls states that “a consideration of...the learning of concepts and principles would also be necessary” (p. 433) and that the simplistic “causal sequence intended to bring about as an end result the appropriate moral sentiments” (p. 452) has been ignored. An educator’s reading of Rawls would note that while he may view education as necessary, it is not sufficiently significant for his theory of justice. Thus, Rawls’ own words seem factually empty when he proclaims the connectedness among education, freedom and reason (p. 452).

The specific arguments of Rawls (1971, 1999) illustrate his deliberate omission. For Rawls, adults come to the original position to establish the principles of social justice. In coming together, they must know the following:

... the general facts about human society. They understand political affairs and the principles of economic theory; they know the basis of social organization and the laws of human psychology. Indeed, the parties are presumed to know whatever general facts affect the choice of the principles of justice. There are no limitations on general information, that is, on general laws and theories, since conceptions of justice must be adjusted to the characteristics of the systems of social cooperation which they are to regulate, and there is no reason to rule out these facts.... This kind of information is admissible in the original position” (p. 119).

It is evident from this central passage that Rawls has presupposed a broad range of knowledge for individuals who come together in his original position. The question is how did these citizens, at any age, obtain this range of prior and sophisticated knowledge? In his Theory of justice, Rawls does not ignore education altogether, but rather he discussed and accepted the psychological stages of learning development. But as an historical and educational fact, he did not address education as it happens as a necessary aspect of life- throughout life- as a basic right. Rawls and others are more concerned with establishing the concepts of rationality and the autonomy of individuals than of describing the purposes and processes of education which make these concepts possible and meaningful.
It is ironic, sad really, that Rawls relies on a metaphor called a *veil of ignorance* to justify the universality of his theory which ensures that decisions being made benefit all in society, both for today and for future generations. The *veil* prevents citizens from focusing on self or group member interests and, therefore, being prejudiced. The *ignorance* prevents citizens from favoring one generation over another. For Rawls, social and economic benefits are to be distributed fairly in that they are guaranteed [up to a social minimum] and proportional for everyone in society. That is, everyone benefits, but the least advantaged benefit most. One can see and even support Rawls’ logic, but his choice of language belies his stated respect for education as a moral human process.

As an educator I wonder why education [that is, the knowledge of the general facts about human society as well as how that knowledge is taught, learned, and used] has been ignored as a pre-requisite for nation-building. This question hardly comes up in scholarly debates. Instead, philosophers and theorists, such as Rawls, debate whether the resources being distributed will be adequate to provide a social minimum for all or whether the present generation will ensure a viable future for coming generations. To which I respond by asking *why has all prior and on-going education been omitted from philosophical discussions of social justice?* What is the role of education and specifically educational leadership in social justice?

It seems as if education as lifelong processes of teaching and learning, whether of children or adults, has been relegated to instrumental, pre-rational, pre-moral, pre-legal, and a non-historical status. Discussions of the human condition and social contract theories have ignored the complex, interactional, educational processes by which children and adults develop socially, mentally, politically, economically, and spiritually throughout one’s life. It is through education that we learn how to interact and negotiate for mutually beneficial ends (Deutsch, 1985), including our knowledge of the fairness principles articulated by Rawls himself. For a theory of justice to assert the need for equity without understanding how it is to be mutually accepted by all participants is to fail to see the power and necessity of education theoretically and practically in societies around the world. It also, according to Roberts (2005), privileges those who are already most advantaged by society, that is, educated adults. If so, what of minority rights and minority voices who are not assumed to be at the *original position*?

My voice, throughout this text, is that of an educator, not the voice of either a philosopher or social theorist. In that sense, it must be heard as a minority voice that has been missing in serious social justice debates. According to Shklar (1990), “[The putative victim] is the privileged voice because hers is the one voice without which it is impossible to decide whether she suffered injustice or a misfortune” (p. 90). This minority voice comes from not only the omission of educators’ voices in philosophical and social theory debates, but also from political and social structures that do not understand the nature of educational theory and educators’ work.

With respect to theory, the educator “sees” the world of theory [i.e., concepts, ideas] and practice [i.e., actions and consequences] differently from other social scientists and philosophers as well as from other citizens. Education begins with interpersonal interactions, of people and texts. It is social at its core. It is also universal in that education begins naturally at birth. Humans, by necessity, learn.
INTRODUCTION

Therefore, a valid theory of social justice would have to emerge inside educative social relationships [i.e., teaching, learning, and leading], and advanced through critiques, reflections, and experimentation. These dynamics are not limited to only children or to schooling.

With respect to educators’ work, the minority status encompasses others including students — those eager to learn, those resistant to learn, those able and disabled, those literate and illiterate. These interactions give educators different and unique perspectives in terms of different generations [i.e., K-12, postsecondary, and adult learning]. In these contexts, I hear the educators’ voice as that of an oppressed minority. Yet, even if one were to deny minority status to educators [and to those whom we teach], there is no denying the educational fact that the primary role of educators is to extend privileges and develop voice in others. Thus, it is by extending privileges through education to others that education is, in fact, the true original position for any society, not just in the present, but also for the future.

Nevertheless, I understand the many reasons for education’s omission. Competing necessities such as food, housing, and health, various social and cultural conceptions of children, notions of state-sponsored schooling and teaching, and the necessity to transmit culture are all valid arguments for minimizing the role of education. That said, I trust that my claim that education has been ignored is a defensible one. The question becomes, following the pragmatist William James, whether education is necessary to the validity of a theory of social justice? What are the consequences in the real world for ignoring education with respect to social justice? To answer these questions, we must understand the problems inherent with education which philosophers, social theorists, as well as educators have not successfully overcome. Our leadership and research voices have not been sufficiently powerful constitutionally, institutionally, organizationally, or even in our own practices and theories of education to overcome the limitations of education.

History, of course, is not on the side of educators or education. Educationists have made strong pro-educational arguments before (see Foster, 1986; Giroux, 1988; Noguera, 2003; etc.); yet, education continues to be viewed as less urgent with respect to serious and immediate worldwide problems. Why should this introduction or even this volume on educational leadership and social justice be any more convincing? We are not so naïve to believe that education alone holds the answers to the world’s problems. That is, the very same complexities and contradictions that have limited every other disciplinary path from achieving more successes theoretically and practically [i.e., peace, health care, literacy, the end of poverty, etc.] are in play inside education as well, especially when education is viewed institutionally (Illich, 1971) and/or ideologically (Apple, 1979). Thus, my objective will be to make plain the inherent problems of validity in education as theory and practice while at the same time address the solutions, possibilities, and leadership powers of education.

Central to these arguments is the fact that by rethinking social justice as an educational construct, it becomes valid under any and all human conditions, however harsh and inhumane. According to Freedom House (2005), a pro-democracy group in the US, 89 countries were classified as “free,” which equates to around 46
percent of the world’s population that live in “a climate of respect for civil liberties”. It is a mistake as well as a conceit to equate social justice with any one system of government, laws, economy, religion, race, etc. As long as individuals can think and act for themselves and for others, there are possibilities for social justice, including just decisions to be silent, to flee, to resist, or to revolt. In fact, when individual choices are most limited, if not also dangerous, then the need for social justice as an educational construct will be the greatest. That will be the lesson that Americans learn from what happened in New Orleans prior to and during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Those who stayed did not have choices. Even in settings below economic subsistence, social justice cannot be deferred. Social justice is accessible to all peoples of the world regardless of ideology or culture. “The virtue of social justice allows for people of good will to reach different—even opposing—practical judgments about the material content of the common good (ends) and how to get there (means). Such differences are the stuff of politics” (emphasis added) (Novak, 2000), n.p.). Yet, what makes difference contingent and in process is education and educational leadership. The challenge throughout is to insert educational processes – as leadership toward social action – as relevant politically and morally into world events (Miron, 2006).
HISTORY AS A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING AND MOTIVATING

Social Justice Work in Education

One important strand that has stretched through much of the history of education in the United States has been the impulse to provide social, political, and economic opportunities to persons who might otherwise languish in oppression or relative poverty. This is evident in the stories of newly-freed slaves who fought in the Civil War and then brought their battle-earned literacy skills back to their communities. It is plain in narratives of the enterprising women who founded female seminaries and academies so that girls might demonstrate the academic capabilities expected of their male peers – and perhaps eventually enjoy expanded political and economic opportunities beyond those females had enjoyed in years past. It is clear in accounts of the LGBTQ [Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual/two-spirited, queer/questioning] rights movement as activist educators have insisted on the right to exist, be visible, and support those same fundamental rights for their students. This strand – to provide social, political, and economic opportunities for those who have been denied on account of status – essentially represents the heart of social justice work, broadly-conceived, not only in the United States, but around the world. There is a rich legacy, then, of educators – formal as well as informal, in the classroom as well as in administrative offices – who have worked for social justice.

Strangely, however, the field of educational leadership and administration generally lacks an overarching historical self-awareness, much less one concerned more specifically with such social justice projects. Certainly some scholars in the field refer to essential work by the venerable David Tyack, such as The One Best System (1974), the classic tale of educationists in search a singularly perfect mode of operation, or Managers of Virtue, co-written with Elisabeth Hansot (1982), an exploration of the tightly constrained expectations of individuals deemed acceptable for the work of school administration. Alongside these scattered references may be found citations of Callahan’s classic statement on the mechanization of school administration, Education and the Cult of Efficiency (1962). Few other historical works are noted.

Indeed, when scholars of educational administration have attempted to render a history of the field, they have tended to step chronologically through an insular body of preeminent educational administration scholarship rather than focusing on
the scholars producing the work, the school administrators described by that work, or especially the larger social contexts in which the field has unfolded. Furthermore, this kind of historical work typically has grouped developments in educational administration scholarship into self-referential theoretical periods, rather than those that are more external and broadly socially/culturally-situated. This work, in essence, is neatly isolated from the messiness of school affairs or the rich contexts in which they are embedded. Finally, much existent historical work produced by scholars of educational administration generally has conveyed an ever-improving, evolving arc to the field’s development, an inevitable and progressive march into the future. In this regard, Ellwood Cubberley’s enthusiastic grounding texts in the field, published a century ago, still reach like a ghost from the past into the thinking of the present, even though the influence is seldom acknowledged (1919, for example). Indeed, contemporary analyses of educational administration rarely stretch back more than a few decades; consequently, they suffer from a somewhat narrow historical perspective—a phenomenon not limited by national boundaries.

The lack of a well-developed historical consciousness is not just a characteristic of the field of educational administration, however. Arguably, it is pervasive in our society, which privileges the future, rather than the past. Our capitalist economy demands attention to earnings in the days ahead; we live in a technology-rich environment that pulls our attention toward new advances while dampening our relationships with older technologies; our media push freshly-minted stories, news, and other entertainments—each with relatively short shelf-lives; our work environments pulsate with demands that we keep up, prepare for and lead change; and we continually search for new solutions to emerging problems, all with the expectation that we are continuing the long, steady march toward a greater society.

Though we maintain some collective awareness of this steady gait into the future, its corollary is much less evident: as we look to the future, we tend to devalue or ignore what has come before. By this implicit logic, the earlier or lower stages of the journey must be inferior. During the early decades of the twentieth century, for example, progressive reformers searched for scientifically sound ways to address a host of new social problems as a way of moving our society forward. While colleges and universities also raced to implement practical, progressive curricular reforms, they simultaneously lost to a corresponding degree a reverence for our cultural past. Kathleen Mahoney carefully details this phenomenon in her award-winning book, Catholic Education in Protestant America (2004), which explores how turn-of-the-twentieth-century skirmishes between Catholics and Protestants in higher education played out in many dimensions, but certainly in regard to the study of the past. Catholic educators emphasized cultural antecedents and the rich study of history while Protestant educators tended toward practical curricula that prepared students for future careers and/or leadership. Though the religious undertones of this Progressive-era clash are no longer so evident in our recognizable curricula of today, they were unmistakably formative.

Although I argue it is unfortunate that our historical consciousness has diminished greatly over the past century, I do not wish to say that knowledge of history is, in and of itself, necessarily good or useful. Many kinds of historical work exist that fail to trigger a larger, deeper understanding of our social relations
– or that otherwise fail to inspire us as humans. Without doubt, some histories are hardly more compelling than a dramatic rendition of a phonebook, especially if they simply emphasize the entrances and exits of persons across the historical stage or step through a finely-graded, though poorly interpreted chronology. Some histories document the lineage of those privileged with power, while ignoring the important mechanisms by which those persons obtained and preserved their dominance. Historical accounts incorporated into our school curricula often have been stripped of some of the most important aspects of our cultural past. Some are steeped in fallacies inserted either for ideological reasons or through negligence and shoddiness in historical craft (Zimmerman, 2002; and Loewen, 1996).

Historians can avoid these pitfalls, however. Thoughtfully interpreted histories can show us with unparalleled depth and fullness how our social relations have come to exist as they do, to understand more deeply our social conditions, and to enhance our ability to ask the kinds of questions that might provoke social justice work in the future. Though historical analysis cannot offer specific answers regarding how conditions will play out, it can assist us in moving into the future with thoughtfulness and awareness. And it can inspire us to action.

Not surprisingly, social justice movements have unfolded in the context of historical understanding. The extended project of racial equality in the U.S. has been punctuated and enhanced with historical accounts that have illuminated the complex, multi-dimensional ways that dominant racial groups have maintained their privilege at the expense of those they oppress. Contemporary queer rights activism has been bolstered by studying the ways that categories of sexuality, gender, and sex have been created over time to perpetuate privileged and oppressed classes of persons and relationships. The women’s suffrage and modern women’s liberation movements leapt into existence in part as activists came to understand far-reaching historical patterns of sex and gender inequity. In short, historical understanding can motivate social justice work by making clear larger patterns of cumulative privilege and oppression along status lines. This understanding may stir persons to social justice work as they recognize that current conditions of oppression have grown from unique prior circumstances and human actions. As such, our current circumstances are open to question; they certainly are not part of an inevitable, predetermined path toward continued oppression. Historical insight, then, contributes to the sense of agency that any social justice work requires. For this reason, many social justice movements have stressed the importance of “reclaiming history,” “telling our stories,” or “showing the face of our oppressor.”

THREE KINDS OF HISTORICAL PROJECTS

At least three different kinds of historical projects can aid social justice work. First, historical accounts that reveal how individuals and groups have acted with intentionality – in the midst of great resistance and perhaps complexity – can help us ask powerful questions about our future directions. Second, histories can allow us to see the full temporal sweep of how social forces have interacted in varying conditions and thus make clearer the deeper principles at work. Third, histories specifically can illuminate the origins and directions of our social relations so that
we can more fully understand why we interact as we do, how collectively we have come to value some things and not others, and how we might be able to direct our future social relations with greater consciousness. And as Dewey insisted, such understanding is a necessary underpinning for the practice of true democratic decision-making, an important goal of social justice work.

ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS

In his critically acclaimed work, *More than One Struggle* (2004), Jack Dougherty spins the remarkable story of how activists in Milwaukee have fought for equitable schooling for black and white students throughout the twentieth century. This nuanced account describes how community members have worked in ever-mutating alliances for a variety of school-based programs, sometimes at cross-purposes, in the quest to eliminate entrenched racial discrimination in education. Dougherty argues against the notion that struggles for equal opportunities in schools all have revolved around monolithic, mid-century Civil Rights era campaigns for integration, or school desegregation. Instead, he contends that the larger story is far more complex, interesting, and filled with timeless human dramas that each can help us understand this larger social justice project.

Dougherty ends the volume with the observation that in many ways, racially inequitable conditions continue to plague Milwaukee schools, perhaps to a degree as powerful as in past eras. The reader might be left to ponder the point of such a book, then, if the story remains so disturbingly unresolved. Policy-makers might drum their fingers on the table as they wait for concrete answers to the seemingly intractable problems described in the volume. There is in his book, as he concedes, no “specific list of useful prescriptions for ‘what works’ regarding race and education” (200). For others who wish to see in such an account a celebration of the remarkable achievement of the Brown decision, *More than One Struggle* will prove disappointing.

What Dougherty accomplishes in this book, though, is far more powerful than any of the just-mentioned possibilities. It stimulates the historical imagination. He quotes from Richard Neustadt and Ernest Maypose’s book, *Thinking in Time*, as he explains that “Seeing the past can help one envision alternative futures.” Furthermore, Dougherty argues, “While history cannot tell policy-makers what to do, studying the past can teach us how to ask probing questions, especially about our presumptions about contemporary policies” (201). *More than One Struggle* succeeds remarkably well in triggering fresh and potentially powerful questions about the quest for equal opportunities in schooling. It is a prime example of historical research that suggests better questions. Rather than “why hasn’t the battle for integration been won?” the larger, deeper story compels us to ask instead: “How have the privileged endeavored to preserve their social and economic advantages in the face of active demands for equality?” In this case, the battle for integration is not the issue of deepest interest, although it has been quite important in certain phases of civil rights campaigns. Instead, the focus is on seeking equality.
What is so important about asking questions, though? Do we not have a more pressing need for answers? At the most elemental level, questions provide the process by which we sort through all that we experience, perceive, or know. They cut through our individual and social understandings to allow us to find ideas that pertain to our purposes. They separate background noise from what we deem most important. Most significantly, though, they compel conscious movement. Lacking questions, we may drift in whatever wash of environmental messages happens to bombard us at any given time, just moving with the prevailing current. Another statistical probability. However, when we ask questions, we create a mental space that our thinking can fill. We define the space. We fill it. We ask more questions. In this process, we consciously open new possibilities. We move with awareness. And with historical accounts of the ilk of More than One Struggle, the questions we might ask could be ones that allow us to reframe this whole social justice struggle in ways that address the deepest issues, rather than the ones that happen to drift in our paths first.

Of course, quality historical work is not the only way we might be stimulated to ask powerful, compelling questions. No doubt, a wide range of other disciplines or pursuits can lead us into such fruitful questioning. Qualitative studies can help us to better understand the lived experiences of persons for whom we have dedicated our professional and/or personal efforts, for example. Philosophical inquiry can awaken and stimulate us to conjure important questions at the greatest levels of abstraction. A well-executed quantitative study can show us the fallacy of some taken-for-granted notions while opening up areas for future questioning or inquiry. The arts and other humanities also can provoke us to ask some of the most profound questions about our human conditions.

If so many other avenues of exploration can lead us to ask compelling questions about our social justice projects, is there anything uniquely important about historical analysis? In a simple sense, historians take static three-dimensional social phenomena and then put them in motion. Time, then, essentially animates. It is, as physicists describe, the temporal, or fourth dimension. Aspects of three-dimensional reality that may seem random or part of the background noise miraculously may become centrally important organizing concepts when seen in motion. Suddenly, trajectories and apparent magnitudes of force operating on them become evident. Lacking this awareness of movement, though, we miss fundamental understandings about our social conditions. Just as the proverbial flatlander, confined forever to existence in two dimensions, never can comprehend existence above and below her plane, an analysis of our social conditions is equally limited if it is constrained to one moment in time, usually the present or near future. Intricacies of movement into and out of our current contexts are lost. The interplay of forces that operate in short and especially in long cycles of time becomes invisible. Historical analysis, at root, is concerned with revealing the motion and forces at work in our social reality. It fully embraces the temporal dimension. Although many disciplines and pursuits can provoke us to ask important questions, historical analysis specifically attempts to stimulate understandings that unfold through time or that exist as a consequence of time.
DEEPER PRINCIPLES

Aside from historical projects that provoke us to ask powerful questions about our social justice projects, questions that require the animation of time, a second kind of historical work helps us to see the full temporal sweep of how social forces have interacted in varying conditions and thus makes clearer the deeper principles at work. Immediately, however, the question springs to mind: Even if we could see deeper principles at work through our study of history, how does this help us? Does it simply help us maintain vigilance so that, as Santayana suggested, we can understand history as a way to avoid repeating it? This seems an unlikely or unreasonable goal in the sense that history never repeats itself precisely. Patterns may be recognizable in retrospect, but each historical circumstance is unique with its own peculiar contextual factors (Dougherty, 2004).

From our study of history, should we be able deduce theories that will allow us to know what will happen in the future? Theory is a way of reducing a complex reality to essential components that can be translated across contexts. If theory can be deduced from historical study, it is difficult to determine the precise level of analysis that theory should describe or govern. Does theory operate at the microscopic level of social interaction, at the level of individual relationships, at group levels, or all the way through to pan-social analysis? Do the forces or ideas described by theory operate within the inanimate environment, in individuals, in clusters of persons, or do they instead play out in a realm external to all of these possible components? Certainly many social theorists in the past have endeavored to identify the largest level of analysis in an attempt to create the most universally applicable theory. A key drawback to such an approach is that detail necessarily must drop from the analysis, and in such detail, significant information may be lurking. Scholarship from the past few decades, though, has mined more extensively local realms, or those of small scales. While meaningful relationships can be determined from studies with such tightly drawn boundaries, the drawback here is that resulting theory does not reliably translate to other contexts. Can meaningful theory possibly exist both in the realms of the large and small? And if it can, could it possibly cohere in any sort of self-consistent or comprehensible manner?

One way that these seemingly disjointed theoretical realms might join is if we consider applying the metaphor of complexity theory. Complexity theory considers how complex phenomena or entities can produce simple behavior. When some systems exhibit apparently infinitely complex behaviors, occasionally order emerges of its own accord. This can occur when component parts individually behave within the confines of a relatively small set of behavior-guiding rules. Then, in the environment of a richly interacting system, those rules gradually play out by producing discernable order, though not order that can be predicted. Essentially, complexity theory is at work when large numbers of entities operate together and create self-organizing systems. An outside force or prime cause is unnecessary for such complex systems. A simple and often-cited example is that of the flying formations of migratory geese. The familiar “V” patterns of geese, it turns out, results from each goose operating by the same set of rules that maximize
visibility, maximize drafting from other birds, ensure proximity so calls can be heard, and other factors. Computer models can generate flight patterns like those of geese with a similar rule set.

It is unlikely that social science research will ever produce rule sets that reliably lead to computer-generated models exactly mimicking our complex social systems. The number of possible interacting variables is so great that it is beyond our current capabilities for defining or calculating. Furthermore, it is improbable that sufficient sample size for analyzing any individual variable could be identified with enough clarity to be useful. To this date, social science scholars have been hard pressed to test complexity theory directly in the manner that physical and computational science scholars have. For this reason, complexity theory cannot be argued as a basis for understanding the social sciences. Instead, it only can offer a metaphor by which we can organize ideas on a highly contingent basis.

With the understanding of this important limitation clearly in mind, I will now explore how the metaphor of complexity theory might enhance our understanding of the role of historical research in social justice projects. First, to address the question of where theory operates, from the infinite to the infinitesimal, the metaphor of complexity theory suggests that it can exist at all levels simultaneously. The small set of rules that governs the behavior of any isolated part of a system interacts with those of all other components until (or if) order emerges. The rules at any one place/time are not any more or less important than any others. They just operate in a different local context while at the same time playing an essential role in the emergence of larger recognizable order. Emerging order then becomes a boundary condition for any subsequent interaction. The entire system is dynamic in the sense that it plays out over time, which, of course, means that it generates a history.

Second, the metaphor of complexity theory might suggest that patterns never repeat themselves precisely from one context to the next, from one time to the next, yet they are unmistakably recognizable. Certainly, any analysis of history shows that, despite Santayana’s admonition, events do not repeat themselves because there are always notable changes in conditions and interacting historical players from one era to another. However, there are similarities between historical moments. There even are recognizable similarities from small levels of historical analysis to large ones. These similarities are the result of the self-organization of the whole system. The delicate balance between all interacting components of the system plays out throughout. Essentially, in complex systems, what happens in small local contexts is completely connected with what happens in larger contexts – and vice-versa. The ways in which components interact are governed by the same rules, but the permutations visible at each level are endless, though clearly recognizable as of the same system.

In some ways, these complex systems resemble how societies interact over time. Consider, for example, the remarkable work of Jared Diamond, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1997) as well as *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005). In the groundbreaking book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Diamond set out to answer his Papua New Guinean friend’s question about why westerners have so much “cargo,” or material wealth
when New Guineans have so little. The answer, which Diamond initially surmised might be simple, turned out to be anything but and required years of dedicated work to piece together. He found that everywhere on Earth, humans have carved out their existence in remarkably varied environments, each with a range of benefits and disadvantages. These benefits and disadvantages have shown up in stark relief when societies have interacted: through war, coexistence, trade, or separation. In interactions such as these, the cumulative advantages that certain humans have enjoyed on account of climate, the availability of domesticable plant and animal species, local geography, natural resources, and other factors, show up clearly. Advantaged peoples trade more successfully, wage and win wars, and acquire wealth that accumulates in small and large ways across generations. Diamond traces these varied interactions, showing how, on almost every continent, social privilege and wealth has been distributed over time. He concludes that westerners have been remarkably lucky to have originated in lands that afforded them geographic advantages, the benefit of naturally occurring animals and plants that could be domesticated, and a full range of other favorable factors. The differences are not intrinsic to the peoples themselves.

Diamond’s epic analysis reveals that although precious resources have been distributed unevenly around the planet, the interactions of peoples have been governed to some degree by the cumulative advantages that each brings to the point of contact with others. These kinds of interactions are recognizable from small levels of analysis to the largest. They are, however, never exactly the same. The patterns, the stories, the sorts of rules he deduces only become clear when societies are examined over broad stretches of time and compared across spatial expanses. What Diamond has revealed is how local patterns of dominance clearly are connected to larger patterns of global economic dominance – phenomena that are created and rendered more evident over time as privilege accumulates. In this case, is there an external condition of economic dominance or social hierarchy? Without question. Is this disconnected from the smaller stories, the cases of individuals negotiating within their own unique contexts? No! They absolutely are connected, one building on and influencing the other.

Although we have few such epic works in the history of education as Diamond’s Guns, Germs, and Steel (in fact, there may not yet be a comparable work in any field), Cremin’s American Education trilogy comes immediately to mind (1972, 1982, and 1990). In this landmark series, Cremin set out to show the history of education in the U.S., defined in its broadest cultural sense. Lacking in this work, however, is any attempt to provide an explanation of how all component parts of the story have interacted with each other, in orders of magnitude large and small. To his credit, that was not Cremin’s goal. Of a less epic nature, the works of Tyack (1974), Tyack and Hansot (1982), and Callahan (1962) together have told us much about how persons in the field of public school administration slowly labored to create places of esteem within their communities and places of dominance over other school workers and students. Not unlike what happens in Diamond’s study, these histories of educational administration show the steady accumulation of advantage as well as the reification of larger social structures that bound future developments. Similarly, in work that is more overtly intended as part of social
justice struggle, Dougherty’s More than One Struggle shows the long, complex battles waged in one city for racial equality in schooling. In this book, there is no sense that the battle has been won, but rather that there have been ever-shifting actors and skirmishes, continually changing strategies, and an overall trajectory showing some whites laboring to maintain their cumulative privilege while persons of color have employed novel counter-strategies.

DEWEY: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL RELATIONS

Beyond histories that provoke us to ask better questions about our social conditions, and those that provide us with insights into deeper organizing principles, a third kind simply helps us develop better social understanding. Such work enables us to see more clearly how we have come to our current conditions. John Dewey argued that historical work of this sort prepares us to interact more richly, mindfully, and ultimately more democratically in the sense that he elaborated throughout his career, but certainly in The School and Society (1990) and Democracy and Education (1916).

In The School and Society, Dewey commented extensively about the role of history instruction in elementary schools, the incubator for future democratically prepared members of our society. His remarks are worth quoting in full here:

If history be regarded as just the record of the past, it is hard to see any grounds for claiming that it should play any large role in the curriculum of elementary education. The past is the past, and the dead may be safely left to bury its dead. There are too many urgent demands in the present, too many calls over the threshold of the future, to permit the child to become deeply immersed in what is forever gone. Not so when history is considered as an account of the forces and forms of social life. Social life we have always with us; the distinction of past and present is indifferent to it. Whether it was lived just here or just there is a matter of slight moment. It is life for all that; it shows the motives which draw men together and push them apart, and depicts what is desirable and what is hurtful. Whatever history may be for the scientific historian, for the educator it must be an indirect sociology – a study of society which lays bare its process of becoming and its modes of organization. Existing society is both too complex and too close to the child to be studied. He finds no clues into its labyrinth of detail and can mount no eminence whence to get a perspective of arrangement.

If the aim of historical instruction is to enable the child to appreciate the values of social life, to see in imagination the forces which favor and allow men’s effective co-operation with one another, to understand the sorts of character that help on and that hold back, the essential thing in its presentation is to make it moving, dynamic. History must be presented, not as an accumulation of results or effects, a mere statement of what happened, but as a forceful, acting thing. The motives – that is, the motors – must stand out. To study history is not to amass information, but to use information in
constructing a vivid picture of how and why [women and] men did thus and so; achieved their successes and came to their failures (pp. 150-151). [emphasis added]

In the end, Dewey’s concern was for our growth as a truly democratic society. Such a society, as he construed it, concerns itself essentially with social justice in that we strive to understand one another, endeavor to think together and without coercion, and seek to make decisions for our mutually agreed-upon good. This process, he argued, is not simple, but requires well-sharpened social understanding that is developed continually. Implicitly, it requires concern for the welfare of others, for the larger good – and it also requires the recognition that the oppression of one is the oppression of all. Because schools play such a vital role in the development of this understanding, as Dewey elaborated it, the work of teaching and leadership in education is, by definition, fundamentally concerned with social justice work.

On the other hand, lacking this awareness and pursuit of a truly democratic society, we are left with our own present circumstances – in which self-interest frequently trumps the common good, in which accumulated privilege goes unchecked in its encounter with accumulated disadvantage. At root, many interactions become ones about winning or losing. Someone advances at the expense of another. Such interactions, played out across a larger society, result in a social system that similarly advantages some and oppresses others, until a fully fleshed out system of social stratification results. In turn, this emergent order serves as a boundary condition for future interactions.

It is necessary, then, for schools to play a primary role in creating a truly democratic society in which individuals think about and consciously make decisions for the welfare of all, rather than exclusively for self-interest. To do this, schools must be places where students and school workers alike strive to understand fully their social circumstances. In time, we must interact respectfully with each other and understand how our interactions at a personal level resemble, but never precisely match, those at larger levels of social analysis, and furthermore, that both are fundamentally connected.

An important way to develop this understanding is through studying the historical sweep of our social conditions, small and large, with an eye toward how persons in the past have made decisions regarding the collective good. To this end, biographical works, among other historical genres, can be remarkably powerful in assisting with developing this understanding. Here, Dewey was quite specific:

… [H]istorical material appeals to the child most completely and vividly when presented in individual form, when summed up in the lives and deeds of some heroic character…. If biography is presented as a dramatic summary of social needs and achievements, if the child’s imagination pictures the social defects and problems that clamored for the [wo]man and the ways in which the individual met the emergency, then the biography is an organ of social study (1900, p. 154).
Kate Rousmaniere’s book, *Citizen Teacher: The Life and Leadership of Margaret Haley* (2005), offers an impressive example of how a biography of an educational leader can help us think about our decisions. In this vivid account, Rousmaniere shows us how Haley, the organizer of the Chicago Teachers Federation (which eventually became the first teachers union in the country), came to understand the deep economic and social constraints within which elementary teachers operated a century ago. The book recounts how Haley forged alliances; developed political strategies; reacted, regrouped, and charged forward when confronted with the inevitable obstacles that materialized throughout her entire career; and yet still managed to articulate a clear and compelling vision around which thousands of teachers organized and agitated. *Citizen Teacher* tells us much about Haley’s social conditions and furthermore, much about how Haley negotiated her way through them. Though Haley may not have achieved the lasting changes she sought, this book makes plain the importance of the central issues about which Haley tried so mightily to educate the citizens of Chicago, issues that remain as relevant to today’s educators as they were a hundred years ago even though particular historical circumstances are not quite the same. This book offers no blueprint for activism. It provides no step-by-step guide for changing the working conditions of teachers. However, it does show the reader how Haley thought about her work, the questions she asked, and the kinds of historical contingencies that she had to consider. It shows us how one person became fully aware of the social conditions of her life and endeavored to reshape them for a larger social good. In this way, the book offers an inspiring example of what one highly thoughtful individual with a commitment to social justice can achieve in schools.

Historical understanding plays a critical role in social justice work, then. Thoughtfully interpreted historical accounts can compel us to ask better questions about our social conditions, questions that might direct more fruitful efforts to engage in social justice activism. Histories also can help us to see the deeper patterns at work in our society, from the microscopic to the macroscopic levels. Although such understanding does not then allow us to predict future events, it provides a better mental framework for our actions. Finally, as Dewey has suggested, histories simply allow us to see more clearly our social conditions, which tend to be muddled and confused in our minds the closer we move toward the present. Historical perspective can elucidate our circumstances and show how they have come to be as they are. With this understanding, we then can learn to interact better with one another in the pursuit of a truly democratic society, as Dewey envisioned it. Such a society is implicitly concerned with social justice work.

**A PERSONAL ACCOUNT**

I have not always valued historical understanding. In fact, history may have been my least favorite subject from grade school through my undergraduate years. One pivotal experience changed this for me, though. When I taught high school physics in a small urban school district in central North Carolina, we noticed that our African American teachers were leaving in notable numbers and white teachers
taking their places. One teacher expressed exhaustion after having worked with disproportionately large numbers of students. Another found himself squeezed out of the coaching position he had long enjoyed. Another, the beloved elderly dean of male students, retired – and quickly found that the sense of community he had build with students around the school and his deep commitment to fair treatment for all students created a vacuum that new administrators did not fill. Although about half of the student body was white and half black, a system that once could boast a somewhat congenial and nicely integrated faculty had reached the point were the number of black teachers was vanishingly small.

A few teachers in the system met to discuss this shift. We decided to ask our central administration for data describing the numbers of black teachers over the previous decade. After repeated requests that obviously and clearly were ignored, we reached out to teachers in every school to help us piece this data together for ourselves. We asked retirees. We canvassed friends. And then we put it all together. The numbers we generated verified our worst fears. The drop had, in fact, been precipitous. Furthermore, we collected stories of what had compelled individual black teachers to leave the district and how their replacements had been hired. In the end, we had created a history of very damaging developments – that energized us to launch into a series of actions aimed explicitly at reversing them. We called the central administration and school board on their varied tactics for subjecting black teachers to inadequate or otherwise unsupportive working conditions. We demanded that policies be instated specifically requiring that outstanding black teachers be recruited and hired. And we held the administration to account for its actions in this regard. By learning about the history of how our school district had been desegregated, how teachers had been assigned to schools by race, and how working conditions had varied by race as well, we came to know explicitly and powerfully what we all had suspected or known implicitly. And for the first time, I respected the power and possibility of historical understanding.

I had hoped to become a school administrator at least in part because of an earnest desire to work with young people closest to the social friction points where privilege and oppression grind together – in schools, in local communities, on the doorsteps of poverty and opportunity. After my activism in my school district, however, my chances for an administrative career diminished. It did not help that school board members told our Associate Superintendent, whom everyone adored and respected, that she would not be considered for the superintendency because the district was not ready for a woman. Women bore administrative responsibilities in that and many other districts in the region against all odds and usually at great cost. They typically held the most challenging principalships as well as the most time-intensive and critical, yet underappreciated central office positions. Clearly, I as a woman would face resistance should I work toward an administrative position. Any shred of hope I may have harbored for such work, though, disappeared when I began to live with my female partner. The district had purged or punished employees across ranks who were rumored to be lesbian or gay. The galvanizing event seemed to occur during my final year of teaching when a series of letters written by local religious leaders to school board members pleaded for the removal of any perceived homosexual influences from the schools. In rapid succession,
personnel changes dotted the system. One teacher was singled-out and told never to wear khaki pants again – at the same time that she was removed from coaching the girls’ volleyball team. Two high school teachers were moved against their will to elementary teaching positions. Another was sent a letter of reprimand for an offense she verifiably had not committed. The list went on…. Although persons in the district did not yet know that I was a lesbian, I knew that it was just a matter of time. North Carolina offered no employment or any other protections for LGBT persons – and furthermore, same-sex sexual behaviors were legally punishable offenses.

I was fortunate enough to enter graduate school at this point where I found a warm, welcoming community in which I could begin to figure out why my career plans had gone so terribly wrong. A single course on the history of western education ignited my imagination by revealing broad, sweeping patterns in which some classes of persons have systematically enjoyed enriching educational opportunities while others have been denied. At each point that I felt as though I could almost grasp the clear pattern at work, however, I would read more books, talk with professors and fellow grad students, and squeeze every relevant resource out of our vast library that I could. And I came to understand that there was simply so much more for me know…. What I learned in my studies changed everything for me.

The most overwhelmingly powerful thing that I learned is that a personal history such as my own was far from unique. I encountered numerous accounts of figures who had endeavored to address social inequities by working in schools – and also who had met with bracing resistance. I discovered incontrovertible evidence that school administrative work had been configured to align well with social expectations for men, but poorly for women. Consequently, I found exceedingly few women in school superintendencies, something, of course, that everyone knew, but that had not been clearly tracked historically before. And I learned that there had always been educators who desired persons of the same-sex. During some historical eras, this was not considered problematic. By the mid-twentieth century, however, visibly homosexual educators had disappeared from the classroom and administrator’s office. Some had been purged; a few committed suicide; many left out of fear; substantial numbers went into hiding, straining to appear as gender-conforming and heterosexual as possible; and a few convinced themselves that their same-sex desires did not exist. Even as the modern gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/queer rights movements had secured significant social gains, I learned countless ways that schoolwork had remained remarkable impervious to these advances, essentially constituting a last bastion of enforced gender-conformity and heterosexuality.

In short, I learned that across these dimensions, I was not alone. I was simply one person in a long history filled with individuals struggling against social inequities in and through schools. I was only one of many women to face insurmountable obstacles – or nearly so – in attempting to lead a profession numerically dominated by women. Also, I was just one of the countless persons throughout the past with same-sex desire who had found a calling and commitment to excellence in the work of the classroom.
In light of this realization, I decided that I would piece together historical accounts that might help others similarly understand that their experiences were part of much larger, though little recounted narratives. I wanted others to know as well that they were not alone, but joined by sisters and brothers from earlier eras who had understood similar struggles. My scholarship, then, became part of my own social justice work. In the following sections, I will discuss three strands of this work.

WOMEN SCHOOL LEADERS

As I recounted in Destined to Rule the Schools (1998), schoolwork historically has been structured so that it is gender-segregated and stratified. Tyack and Hansot’s collective work on this subject inspired me to understand in detail how this happened. Through my research, I discovered several clear patterns. First, women have moved into particular realms of schoolwork when men have chosen to leave them for better opportunities elsewhere. Second, when women have begun to dominate a particular kind of schoolwork numerically (i.e., teaching positions, elementary principalships, and county superintendencies), other gender-associated changes have followed such as lower pay, reduced authority, and lowered respect. These shifted gender associations have further exacerbated men’s exodus from that realm. Third – and conversely, men who have remained in schoolwork have endeavored to carve out acceptably safe niches in which male gender identity, social status, and economic status are preserved. School administration, especially high school principalships and coaching positions as well as superintendencies of large districts have become such niches. The preservation of these niches has entailed a range of subtle and overt mechanisms on the part of school administrators as well as of their local communities to enhance positional status while simultaneously keeping women out. Fourth, despite these efforts to deny women opportunities for school leadership, some women, individually and collectively, have made inroads, demonstrating impressive agency in the process.

My work on this topic focused on three key areas: 1) determining the extent to which women had attained school superintendencies (the formal position for which I could obtain the clearest and most complete data); 2) bringing to light the mechanisms by which some men sought to elevate their own status while denying women access; and 3) telling the stories of women who had resisted and somehow become school superintendents, effectively helping to clear paths for others who might follow. To piece this story together, I compiled a complete database of superintendents who served over the twentieth century. I pored through volumes of published material in which male scholars and school administrators steadfastly refused to speak publicly about efforts to limit women’s participation in school leadership positions. And I strained to find women superintendents in the pages of school reports or newspapers or speeches….

Nonetheless, I found some powerful stories. For example, though some male school leaders publicly questioned the value of women’s suffrage during the state-by-state campaigns, they learned to utter such thoughts only behind closed doors once women won the vote. Newly enfranchised women voters had the disturbing
tendency of driving unresponsive male superintendents out of office, often electing promising women instead. Some former male superintendents organized closed conferences to discuss counter-strategies. Usually in short order, those same forces launched campaigns to “take the politics out of schools” by making superintendencies appointed rather than elected. The explicitly stated rationale was to ensure that the best educated and most capable person might be chosen rather than one prone to corruption or ineptitude. The net effect of this sweeping reform is that women who had been elected to superintendencies by eager and newly enfranchised women voters lost their positions to men who were appointed.

I also found that the mid-twentieth century push for the professionalization of school administration similarly limited women’s inclusion. Widely instituted reforms in the professional training and certification of school administrators increasingly required graduate study – usually in institutions that severely limited or precluded women’s participation. Perhaps one of the most pervasive and longstanding patterns in the gendered history of school leadership, though, is silence. Women’s participation, or lack of it, simply has not been discussed in the professional talk of the field until relatively recently. Without such discussion, women’s marginal opportunity for school leadership was not problematized.

In recounting these stories in Destined to Rule the Schools, I began to ask myself better questions about gender and school leadership. Initially, I simply had wanted to know if there had been meaningful representation of women in superintendencies, and if so, where. When I learned that women made notable progress in attaining superintendencies in some regions, some states, during some years – but then their numbers dropped sharply at other times, I not only wanted to know the specifics of what had happened, but I also wanted to understand the deeper intent behind women’s low or declining numbers. The mechanisms for keeping women out of school leadership have shifted considerably over the past century and a half, but deeper, unresolved social discomfort about women’s roles in our society may not have shifted anywhere nearly as much. My own historical analysis has allowed me to ask better questions in the sense that they have brought my thinking closer to the deeper “stuff” that needs to shift before true gender equity may be possible throughout every aspect of schooling. Just as in Jack Dougherty’s book, More than One Struggle, where he recounts how a century of civil rights activism in the Milwaukee schools has left us with schools just as racially segregated as ever, the story I have told in Destined to Rule the Schools is one where the school superintendency currently is as gender-stratified as it was one hundred years ago. Though neither book outlines a set of prescriptions for change, they both (hopefully) provoke better questioning that might lead to more meaningful and fruitful approaches to these seemingly intractable social justice issues.

SAME-SEX DESIRE, GENDER, AND SCHOOLWORK

In my book, Fit to Teach: Same-Sex Desire, Gender, and Schoolwork in the Twentieth Century, I sought to tell the complex story of how intertwined and changing notions of sexuality and gender have shaped schoolwork in the United
States over the past century. I started by recounting the conditions that compelled me to leave the teaching career I loved. Then I traced how it is that local communities and administrators shifted school hiring patterns in response to social unease about women’s changing roles as well as awareness of a range of sexualities, some of which might be fluid, rather than immutable. Essentially, even though in the 1980s I could not retain my teaching position as a lesbian, such a state of affairs had not always existed. On a personal level, this was a powerful insight because I had grown up with the understanding that lesbians and gay men could not work in schools. I had tacitly assumed that this had always been the case.

I encountered difficulty in gathering sources and putting this narrative together, however. To start, broad social anxieties about same-sex desire have run so deep that profound taboos have kept most discussion of it out of the historical record. This has been particularly true in the realm of schoolwork. Then I faced the very practical decision about whether or not such research would hinder my quest for tenure. This was quite a difficult choice because the only other faculty member at my university who acknowledged being and generally was known as either gay or lesbian had lost a high-profile discrimination lawsuit and subsequently departed. I decided to take the risk.

In piecing the story together, I found several significant patterns. First, communities and schools have hired schoolworkers who are available at a modest cost – and usually secondarily who might possess excellent preparation and skill. This has been true unless a compelling reason has emerged to mitigate this tendency. For example, from the mid-1800s through mid-1900s, school officials strongly preferred hiring single women to teach because they were cheap, plentiful, well-prepared for the money, and not prone to trouble-making. However, by the mid-1900s, the growing association of spinster teachers with lesbianism overpowered otherwise practical concerns. Consequently, the proportion of single women teachers plummeted as married women filled the classroom – to a far greater extent than their representation in the general workforce.

A second noteworthy arrangement that I encountered is that social anxieties about gender generally have been intertwined or even conflated with those concerning sexuality. As women fought for and then won suffrage, they were accused of losing their sexual attractiveness, their marriageability, and even their maternal capacities. Instead, they often were taunted as representing some third sex, of deviance, or possibly as being lesbian. Conversely, men who pursued teaching, particularly at lower grade levels, ran the risk of being labeled effeminate, seeming emasculated, or generally considered homosexual.

A third and powerful thread that has run throughout this history has been the notion that during times of greatest social unease about gender and sexuality, teachers have been pressed into service to provide supposedly correct gender-role modeling as well as to enforce rigid rules about physical displays of affection among youth. When male boarding schools were accused of fostering deviance or overly close relationships among students, faculty reconfigured physical spaces to minimize chances for hidden encounters. They restructured daily routines so that youth engaged full-bore in a range of exhausting activities that might leave them too tired to think of much else. And they penalized previously acceptable behaviors
such as hugs. At the same time faculty were held to account for such enforcement, they also were scrutinized intensely to ensure that their own sexuality/gender identities seemed either wholesome or pleasantly nonexistent.

Fourth, mid-twentieth century fears about otherness in the form of homosexuality proved so formidable that one could face career and social ruin merely with the accusation, founded or unfounded, of same-sex desire. Teachers routinely lost their jobs based only on rumors. Their legal recourse was practically nonexistent. To avoid the possibility of being thought homosexual, schoolworkers learned that they needed to maintain gender-conforming personas. Because of links in the popular imagination between same-sex desire and gender non-conformity, any cross-gender trait or behavior could translate to questions about one’s sexuality, a severe career risk. Schools, then, became sites of extreme gender conformity, enforced strictly, and modeled relentlessly through the hypermasculinized realm of the superintendency (almost exclusively held by men who had been coaches and veterans and who were married with children) to the elementary classroom teacher (nearly always a married woman recruited in part for feminine appearance and manner).

Finally, LGBTQ schoolworkers have in recent decades mounted resistance to this state of affairs. After the Stonewall riots in 1969, lesbian and gay teachers who were fired on account of their sexual orientation began fighting to keep their jobs. The ACLU, and then eventually the NEA and AFT offered legal support for such challenges. Though individual teachers who challenged their dismissals ultimately were unsuccessful in returning to the classroom, their lawsuits gradually chipped away at restrictive legal doctrine, thereby improving the rights of other gay and lesbian school workers. In urban areas around the country, associations of lesbian and gay school workers formed coalitions. They endeavored to support each other, lobby for the inclusion of sexual orientation in their schools’ nondiscrimination policies, and join in the festivities of annual lesbian and gay pride parades. The participation of lesbian and gay school worker associations in pride parades particularly caught the attention of conservative Christians who feared that “homosexual” teachers either would a) influence their children to become “homosexual,” or b) molest them. In a fearsome backlash movement initially led by Anita Bryant, openly lesbian and gay teachers became the focus of a national campaign to drive them back into the closet or out of schools altogether. These battles raged through the 1990s and even beyond.

Though school workers rarely have won decisive victories for their employment rights, they have managed to avoid further restrictions. And during the mid-1980s, attention regarding LGBTQ persons in schools shifted from school workers to students. Many reasons account for this shift, but an important one is that young people increasingly have demanded the right to choose their sexual and gender identities in a manner free of coercion, to be protected from discrimination in schools on account of sexual/gender identity, and to enjoy a supportive school atmosphere. Because of student activism around these matters, especially in coalition with gay/straight alliances, some schools, districts, and states have changed their policies decisively to eliminate discrimination against LGBTQ persons in schools.
In telling the stories in *Fit to Teach*, I saw clearly that patterns at small levels of analysis resembled those at larger levels, though they never precisely matched. An individual teacher might be feared because her/his same-sex desire was considered contagious and dangerous. At the state level, government officials might institute personnel sweeps to clear the ranks of anyone suspected of homosexuality – even if no evidence existed that same-sex sexual behaviors had ever occurred or that homosexuality in and of itself adversely affect professional competence. As explained earlier, I noted that patterns also span expanses of time, such as the time-honored practice of regulating school personnel heavily during periods of social uneasiness about gender and sexuality. Perhaps most important, battles regarding sexuality and gender in schools have represented deeper transactions in which power is established and maintained. Each passing generation sees the transmission of some cumulative privilege as well as disadvantage. Though *Fit to Teach* does not address a question as all-encompassing as the one posed by Jared Diamond’s Papua New Guinean friend about why westerners have so much cargo, it does in a modest and limited manner attempt to lay out some of the historical mechanisms by which power and privilege have accumulated in schoolwork along the lines of sexuality and gender.

ELLA FLAGG YOUNG

As I worked on these two previous historical projects, I repeatedly encountered Ella Flagg Young, who served as superintendent of the Chicago schools nearly one hundred years ago and also who became the first female president of the NEA. She inspired suffrage-era activists around the world to envision the good that women in public positions might accomplish. She seemingly held the door open for thousands of women who would follow her into school superintendencies as well as a variety of other school leadership positions. In addition to these noteworthy accomplishments, she was a scholar, University of Chicago professor, national leader in teacher preparation, active suffragist, and philanthropist. She enjoyed such a degree of fame that she routinely was listed among the ten most important women of her time. That she essentially could revolutionize schooling and national thought in so many ways has captivated me. That she did so while sharing her life with her female companion, Laura Brayton, has left me dazed – and yet fiercely determined to understand her life, thought, and work. I am now fully immersed in the project of writing her biography.

Just as Dewey suggested a century ago in *The School and Society*, biographical accounts can be particularly helpful in enriching our understanding of our social contexts. They allow us to see how heroic individuals faced challenges and attempted to address them. Through their experiences, we can understand the very real human struggles that shape the lives of persons we admire. And so we might then feel emboldened, yet chastened as we attempt to navigate our own experiences.

Strangely enough, since beginning this biographical project, I have become an administrator. I am not the principal or superintendent that I envisioned some twenty-five years ago, but rather an associate dean of a college in a Midwestern
university. I inescapably find that as I weave Ella Flagg Young’s story together, I must consider my own unfolding story as well. As seemingly impossible challenges arise at work, I think about how Young tackled those that confronted her. She is in some ways heroic to me, but not as a model of simple, unerring perfection. Instead, I regard her as a person who stood toe-to-toe with immense, almost unfathomable obstacles, yet she felt fear, worried about finding the best possible outcomes for vulnerable persons or those who needed it most, and still managed to summon the strength to bear the pain and do the right thing. She made what I would consider mistakes. However, I have come to understand many of the complexities that factored into her decisions. These understandings do not preclude my appreciation for her efforts, but only enhance it.

I need to see the face of someone who has felt the restrictions of gender in her desire to provide educational leadership. I want to comprehend how someone from an impoverished and improbable background might draw from it the inspiration to minimize the chances that the same would be perpetuated on others. I want to know the details of how a person with a desire to engage in social justice work wholly confronts the inevitable pain that accompanies the work and yet keeps moving ahead powerfully. And, of course, I personally want to comprehend how someone like Young negotiated her closest sustaining relationship in the context of her larger work, especially because she could so easily have been stigmatized on account of that relationship – or on account of her committed connection to networks of strong women. The answers I find are not simply helpful in drafting Young’s biography, but they also figure mightily into how I think about my own life and work. They inspire my sense of possibility for engaging in social justice projects in my administrative work. In a very real sense, Dewey’s advice about the importance of biographical accounts has become a central consideration in my own life right now. I am writing Young’s biography in part out of a desire to bring research to bear on social justice work. I also am inspired by her story in ways that deepen my ideas of what social justice projects I may be able to accomplish in other parts of my professional and personal life.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

As I look back on my three major historical research projects to date, one thing that is overwhelmingly clear is that I have written (or am writing) each from the perspective of a class of person(s) somehow denied access or power. I obviously wrote Destined to Rule the Schools from the vantage of a woman who at one point had aspired to school leadership. Without question, I told the story of Fit to Teach from the perspective of a lesbian who, on account of status, felt compelled to leave teaching. Should my work consequently be dismissed because I seem to have an axe to grind, so to speak?

Prior to my writing Destined, scholars of school administration somehow had not found the topic of women school superintendents to be sufficient interesting to merit research. Expressed differently, the lack of women school leaders did not seem to be a matter that required change. I reasoned that this lack of interest or willingness to change drove much of the silence that historically had surrounded
the topic. I, however, adamantly wanted the situation to change. Similarly, before I wrote *Fit to Teach*, education scholars generally had not regarded equity for LGBTQ persons in schoolwork as an issue necessitating investigation – with the significant exception of Karen Harbeck, who wrote a dissertation on the history of LGBT teachers, but then left the field to become an attorney and social justice activist in the broader social realm. (Harbeck’s groundbreaking dissertation later was published in 1997 as *Gay and Lesbian Educators: Personal Freedoms, Public Constraints.*) Policies and practices that effectively marginalized LGBTQ schoolworkers seemed acceptable to the public at-large as well as to school officials and education scholars. Once again, though, I wanted this status quo to change.

Quite simply, it is persons who feel the brunt of oppression who typically first take up the charge to change things, to engage in social justice work in the sense of assuring fair access and opportunities for all persons regardless of individual or group status. Individuals with some degree of privilege in a given social dimension are less likely to want to see things shift, especially if such shifts might entail loss of taken-for-granted privilege. Not surprisingly, African, Asian, and Latino Americans have led these respective civil rights movements that have revolved in large part around access and educational opportunity for children of color. Allies of other races/ethnicities have joined these movements, but mainly they have been led by persons of the affected status. The women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s was fomented by women who demanded that they enjoy equal economic, social, and political rights on account of sex/gender. Male allies helped tremendously in the movement, but in the end, it needed to be led by women. Similarly, the LGBTQ rights movement has been directed by self-identified LGBTQ persons.

The end result here is that a person from the affected status group is the most likely one to take up the charge to lead, to conduct extensive research on the experiences of that group, and who probably possesses the greatest motivation to change things. If such efforts are simply written off as having an axe to grind, then by implication, members of any oppressed group will be dismissed in this manner for bringing their plight to wider attention. I argue instead that this is social justice activism in that it is leadership, action, and/or research explicitly intended to bring about equitable opportunities regardless of individual or group status. It is social justice work just as surely as the teacher who grew up in abject poverty might strive to teach young people living in similar poverty so that they might enjoy real opportunities to discover their own powers.

Allies often play vitally important roles in social justice work. Though they may not have experienced first-hand the tang of oppression along one specific dimension, they probably have experienced it along another. It is their willingness to translate their knowledge of this experience to another status group. For example, former Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, who had been a stunning civil rights leader, brought his experiences as an African American to bear in the battle for LGBTQ rights. He proved to be a powerful ally of LGBTQ persons during the 1978 California Briggs’ Initiative that, if passed, would have compelled the dismissal of LGBTQ persons – and those who supported them – from schoolwork.
Allies, though not centered in the particular status group at issue, remember the ways they have been oppressed themselves. They then choose to leverage their relative privilege to help achieve social justice for members of another status group. Social justice work and movements, then, require the leadership of persons in the status group and also the active support of strong allies.

As I have argued directly and implicitly throughout this essay, historical research is one important way that individuals can heighten their awareness of their own conditions. It can inspire understanding that compels social justice leadership on account of one’s status. It can assist potential allies in learning how their own lived experiences of oppression might translate to persons experiencing subjugation along other social dimensions. It can accomplish these ends by provoking us to ask better questions, to understand larger patterns more deeply, and to find inspiration in the infinitely varied stories of human frailty and courage. And it can motivate us to join together in working for true social, political, and economic fairness for all persons.